

**Frederick County Ethics Commission**  
**Minutes for the Public Meeting of Monday, April 21, 2014**

Present: Gwen Romack, Chair  
Brian Duncan, Commission Member  
C. Steven Snow, Alternate Commission Member  
Linda B. Thall, Senior Assistant County Attorney

Absent: R. Carl Benna, Commission Member

Ms. Romack called to order a meeting of the Frederick County Ethics Commission at 7:00 p.m. on April 21, 2014, in the Winchester Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, Maryland 21701.

**Approval of the March 10, 2014 meeting minutes** – A draft of the minutes was emailed to the Commission members before the meeting. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**Discussion of political activity by Commission members** – The Ethics Commission discussed whether there is a need for the Commission to adopt a policy to establish guidelines for members of the Ethics Commission considering publicly advocating or supporting candidates for election to a County position such as County Executive or County Council Member. The members agreed that it was important to avoid the appearance of impropriety or bias towards persons who are or may become subject to the County's Ethics Ordinance, but felt that it was not necessary to adopt a formal policy at this time. The Commission may revisit this issue at a later point. Ms. Romack asked whether other jurisdictions limit political support or advocacy by ethics officials.

**Discussion of vacant Ethics Commission positions** – The Commission discussed the application process for candidates who wish to apply for appointment to the Ethics Commission. Candidates will be encouraged to contact Joyce Grossnickle in the County Manager's Office.

**Discussion of notification process for new ethics complaints** – The Commission discussed application of the provision in the Commission's Standard Operating Procedures that generally requires that notice of a complaint be given to the subject of the complaint upon its receipt. The practice has been to defer notification until the Commission has decided whether the Commission has jurisdiction to hear the complaint and, if there is jurisdiction, how the Commission will proceed to make a decision on the complaint. The Commission asked that notice be given to the subject of the complaint without delay when the complaint is first received.

**Decision to meet to perform an administrative function** – The Commission members agreed unanimously to conduct an administrative function meeting to discuss two pending complaints.

**Required information regarding the administrative function meeting** – The Commission began its administrative function meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m. on April 21, 2014, in the Winchester Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, Maryland 21701. Present for the meeting were Ms. Romack, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Snow and Ms. Thall. The Commission members discussed two complaints alleging violation of the Ethics Ordinance. The Senior Assistant County Attorney was directed to contact the person who filed the first complaint to obtain additional information. The Commission took note of the responses from the subjects of the second complaint, finding that violations of the Ethics Ordinance had occurred, but that the subjects of the complaint were now in compliance. The Commission took the position that no further action against the subjects of the second complaint was warranted. The Commission asked that the person who filed the complaint be informed of the actions taken in response to the complaint.

### **Adjournment**

The Ethics Commission adjourned its meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m.

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Linda B. Thall, Senior Assistant County Attorney